

Wilderness Living

Teeth

Make a powder of equal parts salt and baking powder. In a separate bottle with stopper, bring some apple cider vinegar. Wet toothbrush with vinegar by putting a few drops on the brush (never dip toothbrush in vinegar to avoid adding germs to the vinegar). Sprinkle some of the powder mixture on the brush. Brush teeth. This is one of the best homemade tooth pastes anyone can use. The vinegar helps to reduce plaque and tartar; the salt keeps gums healthy and the baking soda scrubs away germs.

Bring dental floss to use between brushings.

Bodily Functions

Bring enough toilet paper.

Latrines will be available at the camping area. But when you're not in such an area, make sure you have a small shovel. Dig a hole at least 6 inches deep – 10 inches is better, then do your business in the hole. When finished, cover it up. This is what Abba commanded for the Children of Israel in the Desert.

Deu 23:13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee

Never defecate near water or running stream to avoid pollution. The same for urinating.

Cleanliness

Body Odor & Wetness: Use a rock crystal that can be purchased a health food store.

Mix equal parts talcum (baby) powder and baking soda in a container or Ziploc bag. Bring along a powder puff. This is a very effective deodorant AND the talc and baking soda mixture absorb quite a bit of moisture. If you still get wet from perspiration during the day, it is very easy to powder puff yourself anytime.

Don't be afraid of having body odor. Everyone will have it.

Washing: Wash in a stream before bedtime.

Heat some water on a camp stove to use for washing with a cloth.

Underwear can be washed in a very small amount of water just before bedtime which is also the best time to change underwear.

Wet Ones or other baby wipes are a great way to freshen up.

Bring rubbing alcohol to wash hands after bathroom breaks.

Extra wash cloths, rolled up and carried inside Ziploc bags, are very helpful. Keep a bar of soap in a separate bag. Then, all you will need is a little bit of water in your mess kit (yes, your mess kit) that will allow you to rinse the rag. Use a little more water and soap or rubbing alcohol to clean your mess kit afterward.

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You can also take hand sanitizer.

Showers: A portable shower, powered by solar heat, or a camp shower, which is a bag filled with water, hung to a tree, with a tube running down to a shower head.

Really, the only areas that “need” to be washed to avoid body odor and to make you feel clean are feet, armpits and crotch. Americans bathe and shower too much, anyway. Washing too much strips away the oils from the skin causing premature wrinkling and it removes the dead layer of skin cells that protect us from germs. Have you ever wondered why people are becoming more and more susceptible to outbreaks of all kinds? We wash too much!

Care Of Clothing

It is not necessary to wash outer clothing every time they are worn unless you’ve gotten mud or another stain on them. Simply “air” clean your clothing by shaking, airing, and sunning it for 2 hours.

If you are using a sleeping bag, turn it inside out after each use, fluff it, and air it.

Hair Care

Shampoo is not required to keep hair clean. In fact, shampoo, which is a detergent that is VERY hard on your hair, is also hard on soil and water. In the wilderness, use a mixture of baking soda and water. Make a batch of this to store in a bottle with a cap that can be tightened. Take an 8-ounce squeeze bottle in your backpack. Pour a small amount into the squeeze bottle (8 oz of this solution will keep 2 people in “shampoo” for about a week). Soak your hair with plain water, then squeeze a bit of the baking soda mixture over your scalp, starting at the crown, massaging as you go and squeezing a bit more here and there, as needed. Include the ends of your hair as well, but remember that since most of the oils originate from the scalp itself, the hair will naturally get cleaned once the scalp is clarified. Finish washing/showering, then after a few minutes, I rinse it out.

Apple cider vinegar is a mild acidic, working well to counteract the baking soda, and thus acts as a great replacement for conditioner. It detangles the hair follicles, seals the cuticle, and balances the hair’s pH balance. Using a squeeze bottle or your drinking cup, put about 1 tablespoon of vinegar, then fill up the bottle of cup. Pour over your hair and let it sit for up to 10 minutes.

You might have a transition period that lasts from a few weeks to a few months, where your hair reacts with excess oil to the lack of shampoo. This is perfectly normal. It is used to having its oils stripped, so it might take time for the oil to stop producing so heavily in protest. A normal transition period may only last about two weeks.

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If you find that your hair is too oily (after the transition period), try using less vinegar, or not using it all together. Some people also use lemon juice instead of vinegar as their acidic clarifier.

If your hair feels too dry, use less baking soda, or try using honey instead of vinegar.

Feet

Proper foot care is more important than many people think and the requirements are not necessarily obvious. Always have 2 additional pair of socks in your back pack. As soon as your feet get wet, either from sweat or walking through water, change socks. Hang the wet pair out to dry so they can be rotated to keep your feet dry.

Carry a sewing kit and use the needle for popping blisters. Make sure to sanitize the needle first by holding it over a flame for a few minutes (it will turn black) or putting it in some of the rubbing alcohol you brought for a few minutes.

Next, thread the needle with a clean or sterilized thread from your kit. Run the needle and thread through the blister after cleaning the blister. Detach the needle and leave both ends of the thread hanging out of the blister. The thread will absorb the liquid inside. This reduces the size of the hole and ensures that the hole does not close up. Pad around the blister.

Cooking & Cleaning Up

Each person should have his or her own mess kit. Each person should be responsible for keeping it clean. Children need to learn the skill of handling and cleaning their mess kits, but with adult supervision.

Dispose of soapy water at least 200 feet away from water sources.

If your dishes/mess kit contains food particles, strain them out and pack them out. A thin cloth such as a bandana or piece of pantyhose works well for this.

Drinking & Cooking Water

Always get your water upstream from the campsite. Have available water purification pills from any store (even Walmart has them). Purify the water using the pills or by boiling.

Staying Cool

Use one of the wash cloths from the Ziploc bag. Wet it with cold water and put it on your forehead.

Camp Cleanliness

Bring garbage bags to keep your site clean. When backpacking, you will have to pack out your trash.

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Women: See below for more instructions specific to the needs of women.

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Caution Men: This section applies only to women. That is not to say you can't read this section, but most men will find this discussion less than pleasant and quite unnecessary.

Women Only – Caring For Yourself During Menstruation

From <http://www.helium.com/items/1760362-feminine-hygiene-in-the-wilderness>

Estimate how many pads and/or tampons you use in a typical period (if you have time, actually counting them is even better), and pack slightly more, just in case. Like with toilet paper, above, keep your [clean](#) supplies in a ziplock bag and have another bag for used ones. Carry both bags inside a larger stuff sack or a plastic bag covered in duct tape.

When you need to change one, simply duck behind a tree, bush, or large rock and take care of it. If you use tampons without an applicator, you will need baby wipes to clean your [hands](#) before and after. If you use pads, you will probably want baby wipes to help keep clean "down there." The wipes can be carried in the supply bag, in a ziplock of their own.

Be sure to bring fragrance free ones. Scented baby wipes can be irritating to the genitals, and applying anything scented to that part of the [body](#) may cause yeast infection or bacterial vaginosis. Disinfectant wipes, marketed for cleaning the hands, are not good for this, either. Not only are they usually scented, they have alcohol, which really burns on sensitive body parts.

If you use a [menstrual cup](#), it is a fine option for the wilderness. For those unfamiliar with menstrual cups, they are worn inside the vagina, like a tampon, and catch the blood instead of absorbing it. Most menstrual cups are reusable. Instead of changing them, you empty them, clean them, and reinsert. One brand of menstrual cup, Instead, is meant to be disposable.

When emptying a menstrual cup in the great outdoors, squat as if you were urinating, and keep your pants well out of the way, to avoid spilling on them. Pull the cup out and empty it on the ground, just as you would empty it into a toilet. If it is a reusable cup, [clean](#) it with baby wipes, and you are good to go. If you are a menstrual cup user, you will need to clean your hands especially thoroughly, so baby wipes are vital.

It is advisable to dig a shallow hole to pour the blood into. Unlike a cat hole to defecate in, it does not have to be all of six inches deep. One or two inches is enough. You may also skip digging the hole and bury the blood afterward, or cover it with leaves. There will not be that much of it.

Whether you typically use pads, tampons, a menstrual cup, or a combination of any of these, it is best to use the same in the wilderness. A hiking or backpacking trip is not a good time to start using tampons or a menstrual cup if you have not used them before.